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4-H WORK CONTRIBUTES TO A MORE DESIRABLE HOME

A radio talk by Lucy M. Upshaw, Home Demonstration Agent, Madison County, Alabama, delivered in the National 4-H Club Radio Program, May 2, 1936, and broadcast by a network of 58 associate NBC radio stations.

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The 4-H club program in Alabama is touching in a very definite way the lives of a large number of negro girls in the State. Last year girls in 15 counties shared the advantages offered in the home improvement projects, including home crafts, and house furnishings. These girls have used improved methods of repairing, remodeling, and refinishing old furniture, and have learned to make new furniture from boxes, fruit, vegetable, and egg crates. There has been considerable improvement of walls and ceilings by using whitewash, native clays, paint, and cardboard.

Another phase of the home improvement work has included the making and hanging of curtains and shades and making rugs from rags and burlap bags.

No matter how meager the income of the family may be, each girl is encouraged to make some improvement in the home. We have a slogan, "Take what you have and make what you want." Keeping this in mind, the girls have taken odds and ends and turned them into useful articles.

Cora Belle Townsend of "Farmers Capitol Community" has been in 4-H club work eight years. For four years she has been doing the housekeeping for her grandmother and uncle. It is her duty to select and prepare the meals, do the gardening and canning, raise poultry, make the clothing and care for the home generally. Since she has been in the home the dining room and kitchen have been screened. In her own room she has refinished the furniture, papered the walls, and made a large rag rug for the floor.

Idelle Barley of "Pond Beat Community" shows her interest by doing the largest share of caring for all the rooms in the home. Idelle is one of five sisters now at home, all of whom are 4-H club members.

Some of the girls make one project help finance another. This is true of Estella Douglass of "Pennys Community." In 1935 Estella used some of the money earned from her garden and poultry projects to purchase materials for her home improvement work. She made seven rugs, one spread, two pairs of curtains, three dresser scarfs, and bought paint to refinish the furniture in her room.

It is interesting to note how this work is carried over into the lives of 4-H club girls when they become housekeepers.

Typical of this group is Maggie Sullivan, a former 4-H club girl of "Berkley Community" now married and a member of the home demonstration club. She has taken the training received in her club activities into her own

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home. She has fashioned a cheerful little place out of what was seemingly impossible. Except the stove, all the furniture in the kitchen is home-made. There are two tables, a cabinet, wood box, high stool, and shelves for the lamp and clock. Her latest step saver is a fifteen gallon water keg with a faucet which is conveniently placed in the kitchen and filled every morning.

She has a dresser and washstand made from orange crates in the bedroom. There are braided rag rugs on the floor, stenciled curtains at the windows, and a few pictures decorate the wall. She has a small poultry flock, a garden, a cow, and a hog. Cleanliness and orderliness are quite noticeable in all of these former 4-H club members' homes.

Definite programs have been carried out in 15 counties in Alabama, and recently the work has begun in five additional counties. Four hundred and twenty girls' rooms were made comfortable and attractive.

The aim of the 4-H program is to train girls to meet efficiently the problems of the home. We realize that the only training the majority of these girls will get must come through their 4-H club work.

Their project activities include home improvement, gardening, poultry, foods and nutrition, clothing, health, and sanitation. There are 5,099 girls enrolled in club work including all projects.

We feel that it is safe to say 4-H club work for negroes has been far reaching in its effect upon the rural homes of Alabama.

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